The Billions Our Air War on North Vietnam Cost, P. 3

When Wall St. Investors Yawn With The New Left—First Sign of That New Nixon Unity

"'My impression of customer response to the election frankly, was that they felt ennui,' commented Richard M. Gordon, a securities salesman in Hayden, Stone. 'I've not had a single buy order this morning.'"

—From the New York Times *financial page morning-after investor survey Nov. 7. The stock and bond markets like Students for a Democratic Society seemed to think the election results made no difference.*

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No Magic or Miracles In Nixon

In one respect the election campaign of 1968 was standard. In most elections the rival candidates try to sound as much alike as possible. This is true even of campaigns which proved turning points in American history. No one could have been more equivocal on slavery than Lincoln. FDR in the 1932 campaign sounded like Herbert Hoover. The voice of the people was no more blurred in 1968 than usual. To get a majority under most circumstances in a big country with a wide range of opinion, it is necessary to get down to a pretty weak and ambiguous common denominator. The lack of a clear choice on Vietnam reflected the fact that both parties, like the country, were agreed in a desire to get it over with, but divided as to whether the best means was an all-out military effort or negotiation. The close vote reflected the toss-up character of the decision, and the campaign ended with all three candidates agreed on pursuing negotiations for an "honorable peace", whatever that means.

Maybe Like Mowing The White House Lawn

"Agnew became a controversial figure during the campaign and there had been considerable speculation that Nixon would put him on a back-burner in his administration. But Nixon's announcement today sounded as if he intends to give Agnew an important, but closely watched,* role in the administration. 'My plan is to give him some new duties beyond those of any Vice President,' Nixon said."

—Washington Star *from Key Biscayne Nov. 9*

*Noting that the "promotion" would deprive Agnew of any personal staff or even personal press representative, and put him in the White House under close supervision, the *Star's* correspondent next day quoted an unamed "foreign reporter" as saying "Agnew was just put under White House arrest." We hope the Secret Service tracks down this sly fellow and deports him, preferably to Greece, where the Papadapoulos regime has special facilities for irreverent newsmen.

For A Tougher Racial Policy

The other decision ratified by the election is not so pleasant. If you add the Nixon vote to the Wallace vote to Humphrey's me-tooism on law and order, you are forced to conclude that the white majority is for tougher action to deal with black unrest, though the country is still far from a new irreconcilable conflict. Except in the deep South, Wallace proved to be a fringe phenomena. On the other side the heavy black vote for Humphrey shows that the power of the black nationalists and extremists has been even more exaggerated than that of the Wallaceites. It is clear that the overwhelming majority of the blacks are ready to participate in normal politics if it offers any meaningful choice at all. Meaningful choices often turn out to be lesser evils, and at the last moment to blacks, as to many disaffected white radicals, Humphrey looked like a lesser evil than Nixon and Agnew. Cleaver and Gregory picked up only a handful of black votes. This Humphrey vote means that there is still time and room for racial reconciliation.

We don't think Nixon is the man who can bring it about. Let me put the problem in large terms. What the French call "immobilism" is characteristic of human society everywhere, irrespective of the social forms. Most rulers of human societies find themselves hemmed in by the circumstances under which they took power. Little changes. There isn't much elbow room in Washington or Moscow, for example, without radical measures. But radical measures require a willingness to take risk. Khrushchev showed it when he made his secret speech on Stalin, Pope John when he transformed the Roman Catholic Church, de Gaulle when he got out of Algeria. Each had the courage and the insight for fresh directions. This is what America needs to deal with the twin problems of the urban and racial crises at home, and with our over-extension abroad. Nixon hasn't got what it takes.

The first obstacle is the strategy which brought him to power. His base is the South, the small towns and the comfortable. This does not necessarily rule out radical measures. De Gaulle was swept into power by the very forces, military and colonialist, he was soon to "betray" by his magnanimity in Algeria. Khrushchev's constituency was a Communist party hierarchy matched in its unimaginative stuffiness only by the College of Cardinals which elected John. But those who looked closely at de Gaulle's past and John's, if not Khrushchev's, could see that they were innovators. There is no sign of that quality in Nixon.

Nixon is the first real Republican to win the Presidency since 1924 when Coolidge was elected. People have forgotten that Hoover, like Eisenhower, had been so apolitical that he was once suggested for the Democratic nomination in 1920. With Nixon we are back to the genuine article. He is of the same bland, banal and Babbitty breed as Coolidge and Harding. Like them he symbolizes the desire of the well-to-do

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and of small-town America for "normalcy", for an end to emergency and experiment, for a Canute that will somehow hold back the tides of change. Like Coolidge and Harding, he is inescapably insipid, the type that vice presidents of banks regard as solid fellows. That kind of leadership ruined the Republican party before and will do so again.

The Welfare System For The Rich

There is no cheap way out. The first choice is between urban-racial requirements and the upper class welfare system which is the military-industrial complex and aerospace. This is the gravy train of the suburbs, the technicians and the new millionaires of Texas and California whose gilt-edged old age pensions depend on militarism and the space race. These are the richest and easiest sources of the contributions a Presidential campaign requires; Kennedy tapped them in 1960 with the "missile gap" nonsense; Nixon has done so again with a "security gap", a "research gap" and a "submarine gap," all equally nonsensical. Nixon knows it, as Kennedy knew it, but that won't keep Nixon from stepping up the arms race just as Kennedy did. The key point to watch is what he does about the anti-ballistic missile; only a program of this size can support the complex and aerospace in the style to which they have become accustomed. It is hard to see Nixon breaking loose from his constituency on that one. So the course is set for a lot of nonsense about letting free enterprise solve the problems of the ghetto. He will try to win over a thin upper strata of Negro leadership, but without alienating his base. It is the unexpected outbreak which is to be feared; then we are likely to see resort to force and a revival of witch-hunting old-Nixon style. Both will intensify racial antagonism and crisis.

This is the danger on which a new opposition should focus. Humphrey's flabby joint post-election appeal with Nixon against "divisiveness" shows that he is as incapable of leading it now as he was before the election. If there is no "divisiveness" there is no two-party system and there is no real choice again. To deny choice is to provoke and extend the really dangerous divisiveness of alienation among the youth and the blacks. A real opposition is necessary if orderly change is to be possible. But Humphrey in the campaign showed himself constitutionally incapable of leading such opposition. To follow him will only ensure another defeat. Only McCarthy began to open up the real issues. If he could develop a rapport with black aspiration, he could lead an effective opposition, inside or outside the party, but preferably within it. There is no substitute for that coalition the Democratic

The Case For Coalition

"The most hopeful way of achieving a peaceful solution would seem to be for the Americans to exert pressure on President Thieu to permit some established middle-of-the-road politicians, such as Dr. Dan and Mr. Dzu, to make contact with the leaders of the NLF in a sympathetic but neutral capital in South-East Asia. Dr. Dan was dropped from the present Cabinet for having suggested the possibility of a coalition during a visit to the United States and Mr. Dzu, Thieu's former rival in the Presidential election, is in prison for advocating a policy which is now generally accepted as the only way to break the political stalemate.

"The formation of a Coalition Government in Saigon could serve as an important rallying point for the moderate non-committed people of South Vietnam, who are tired of coups and war lords. Many of them already see the establishment of a Coalition Government as the only hope of preserving their bourgeois way of life. These small capitalists would strengthen the hands of those non-Communist lawyers, businessmen and doctors who have slipped away during the past few years to join the NLF, which, of course, is led by Communists. . . .

"If such a coalition could obtain support of the middle rank officers in ARVN—who, after all, are the sons of the urban middle classes—they could render the organisation of a successful coup extremely difficult, if not impossible. The South Vietnamese officer, although fighting on his native soil, is just an anxious to return to civilian life as the American draftee, and he can count on the support of the Vietnamese townswoman, for whom war means loneliness and misery."

—Clare Hollingworth, just back from Saigon, writing on The Next Phase in Vietnam in the Conservative London Daily Telegraph, *Nov. 2.*

From A Portrait Meant To Be Friendly of That Man in Saigon Who Blocks The Peace Talks

"Saigon—For a political figure who must depend on the popular vote, Nguyen Van Thieu [South Vietnam's military President] has a few shortcomings when it comes to stirring the masses. Even his ardent fans admit that in public he is quiet, dignified, cautious, withdrawn and uninspiring—in a word dull. . . .

"When one Cabinet minister complained that he was losing key personnel to private industry and asked permission to raise the salaries of five aides, the President turned him down on grounds that this was against regulations . . . Mr. Thieu suggested the minister simply add five fictitious names to the payroll and give the newly created salaries to the deserving aides . . .

"Not everything Mr. Thieu has done has been received with enthusiasm by U.S. officials here. The arrest earlier this year of Truong Dinh Dzu, runner-up in the 1967 presidential election, for advocating negotiations with the Vietcong sparked charges that Mr. Thieu was using his power improperly to purge political rivals [and Dzu, as this story fails to mention is still in jail—IFS]. Also, Mr. Thieu has done little to win the support of the rural population . . . Though Mr. Thieu has talked about agrarian reform and about relieving the disparity between the war-caused privations of the countryside and the 'luxury' of the cities, he hasn't made any changes . . .

"Mr. Thieu betrays an extreme sensitivity about his position. On a flight to Honolulu last summer, accompanied by cabinet ministers, aides and bodyguards . . . Mr. Thieu—quartered in a private cabin—was asked if he wanted dinner, but he declined. The others were served and later Mr. Thieu decided to eat, too. His meal arrived and an aide remarked that it was the same steak dinner menu served to the others.

"Mr. Thieu became highly upset, according to sources who witnessed the incident, and berated the airline staff for serving him a meal similar to the others. Then he devoted his attention for the rest of the trip to planning his menus. He demanded special meals on special chinaware and went so far as to insist he be served breakfast rolls while other members of the party be served ordinary bread."

—Peter Kannin Wall St. Journal *Oct. 31, "President Thieu Pleases U.S. By Quiet Efforts to Increase Stability."*

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party represents. To capture, broaden and educate it seems to me essential if the country's problems are to be solved peacefully.

McCarthy is right when he says the narrow returns show that Humphrey might have beaten Nixon if the bombing halt had come earlier. But there is reason to doubt that Johnson wanted a Humphrey victory. A Humphrey defeat may have suited his vanity and calculations. Johnson worked well with Eisenhower in the 50s, and may hope to work as closely with Nixon. The extraordinary pact reached between them at their first White House conference after the election must encourage the ambitions Johnson may nurture to be an elder statesman of the bipartisan Establishment. The Nixon-Johnson agreement may seem at the moment to safeguard the Paris talks from upset by Thieu. But when two such tricky operators agree, the pro-peace forces had best be on guard.

A Most Intricate Con Game

There has rarely been such an opaque con game as the Paris talks, and it is not surprising that all sides are suspicious. Hanoi paid an unexpected price. It did what it said it would never do, submit to conditions for a bombing halt. It agreed to sit down at the peace table with the Saigon government. "It is absolutely out of the question," Wilfred Burchett told Tokyo *Shimbun* in a Phnom Penh interview Oct. 30 on his return from Hanoi, "that North Vietnam and the NLF would talk at conferences with representatives of the present Saigon regimes." To agree to sit down with the "puppets" as Hanoi has done, and to scale down the fighting, must seem to the NLF a repetition of 1954 when Hanoi bought its independence at the expense of the South.

The lull around the DMZ has made it possible for the U.S. First Cavalry to be moved southward into the Mekong Delta for "pacification" operations. "We are not taking any inhibitions on our own military operations in South Vietnam," Walt Rostow said on ABC *Issues and Answers* Nov. 10, specifying that we had not agreed to a cease-fire and that U.S. and ARVN forces were "moving out into the countryside; pacification is accelerating." While U.S. bombing of the countryside is stepped up, the NLF is expected to give up the bombardment of the provincial towns and outposts from which the "pacification" forces operate.

It is enough to make one wonder whether those "certain outstanding matters" between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to which Nixon referred after his White House visit might possibly include an agreement to let the Russians finally "pacify" the

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Add Delusions of Saigon

"High South Vietnamese officials say privately the bombing halt came too soon. They argued again today that the enemy was approaching military defeat."

—Washington Post *from Saigon Nov. 9*

"Despite the official figure of 166,000 enemy soldiers killed this year, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units still represent 220,000 men. The allied camps are fortified bastions, surrounded by barbed wire, watch towers and searchlights, defended by tanks, artillery and machine guns. Few Americans venture unescorted any distance from major cities.

"The South Vietnamese army is being described as 'tremendously improved' in recent months. It has 'gained confidence in itself' and now even engages in independent operations. According to more skeptical appraisals, most of its members are mainly on guard duty. Of the 10 organized divisions, only one, in the north, is really aggressively active. The fact that the Mekong River delta, where there are few American troops, is the least 'pacified' area tells its own story."

—*Andrew Borowiec,* Washington Star, *Nov. 8.*

"The Government in Hanoi and the political arm of the Vietcong—the National Liberation Front—today administer over 1,800 of the 2,500 villages and over 8,000 of the 11,650 hamlets inside South Vietnam. Indeed, Saigon administers less than eight million of the total population of 17 million and of this eight million some four-and-a-half million are soldiers and civil servants paid by the state."

—*Clare Hollingworth, London* Telegraph *Nov. 2.*

Some Figures On The Total Cost Of Our Air War Against North Vietnam

Now that the bombing of North Vietnam has ended, at least temporarily, we phoned the Pentagon press office for some figures on what it all cost. The Pentagon tries to hide this by lumping aerial figures for both Vietnams. The figure which startled us most was for the total bomb tonnages dropped on Vietnam, North and South, up until the end of October. This was given as 2,948,057 tons. When we asked for comparative figures, we were told that the total tonnage dropped in World War II was 2,057,244, the grand total for both the European and Asian theatres. So we dropped almost 50 percent more bombs on Vietnam than on all Eurasia and the Pacific. The total dropped on Korea, North, and South, in the Korean War was 635,000. We have dropped five times as much on Vietnam. We asked the Pentagon how to figure the cost and were told about 50 cents a pound. This means the bombs alone cost about $3 billion.

When we asked whether most of this was dropped on North Vietnam, we were told only about a fifth was dropped on the North. So that would run to $600,000,000.

As of Oct. 29, we had lost 914 fixed wing planes and 10 helicopters over the North.* An attack or fighter plane averages about $2 million, a helicopter about $250,000. So you can add another $2 billion for planes and helicopters lost in combat over the North. That brings the total to $2,600,000,000 for the bombing of the North.

But that is not the whole story of plane losses. There is another category of air losses not due to ground-to-air or air-to-air fire. This includes planes hit by mortar fire, damaged in accidents, or lost in Vietnam through other causes. The grand total of these for both Vietnams is 1,198 fixed wing and 1,214 helicopters. These may be worth roughly another $2 billion for the fixed wing and another $300 million for the helicopters. If half of this is allocated to the air war against the North, it would bring the total cost of the attacks on the North to $3,750,000,000.

To this must be added the cost of pilots lost. The Pentagon has given out a figure of "more than" 450 pilots killed or missing in the air war over the North. The mean cost of training a modern combat pilot is $450,000. That would add another $202 million to the cost, bringing the total up to almost $4 billion. Never was more money blown away in a more wicked cause.

*** The combat losses in the South during the same period was 315 fixed wing planes and 906 helicopters.**

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Why Both South Vietnamese Factions May Fear A Sell-Out

(Continued from Page Three)

Czechs while they let us "pacify" South Vietnam in that Korean-style peace Johnson has always wanted.

In this murky game Thieu is as fearful of a sell-out by Johnson as the NLF may be of a sell-out by Moscow. Johnson's troubles with the South Vietnamese regime recalls Eisenhower's with the South Koreans. The peace talks on Korea were dragged out for two years because the South Korean regime, with encouragement from the U.S. military, kept upsetting the apple-cart. Syngman Rhee, like Thieu, didn't want the war to end until we had reconquered the North for him, and he exacted concessions which still keep U.S. troops in Korea 15 years after the cease-fire, with no peace treaty in sight. The Rhee dictatorship repressed all those who wanted a peaceful settlement, as the Thieu dictatorship does today.

Ten Newspapers Shut Down

In Saigon we locked ourselves in by rigging elections which give die-hard Catholic refugees from the North control of an unrepresentative legislature while majority Buddhist and pro-peace elements are gagged. In the last few days no less than ten Saigon papers have been shut down or suspended for pro-peace views while Truong Dinh Dzu, the peace candidate who came in second in the presidential elections, has been taken from his Saigon prison to a notorious penal island as if in fear that he might escape and become the leader of a compromise regime. Hundreds of Buddhists are in prison for advocacy of peace, and only the die-hards are allowed to speak. Thieu obviously feels so weak that he thinks even sitting down at the same table in Paris with the NLF may fatally undermine his regime at home. He fears his Popular Forces in this unpopular war may begin to melt away.

The No. 1 business of a new opposition must still be to watch these tricky and precarious peace talks. Even if they don't break up, they may still leave U.S. troops bogged down indefinitely as in Korea, with the danger of another major war in the Asian quicksands.

On The U.S. Navy's Nixon Gap

"The Soviet Union is making a very impressive bid to become the world's No. 1 sea-power . . . At the end of President Eisenhower's administration our Navy held an unquestioned superiority . . . But new civilian leaders of the Defense Department decided we could take a breather. There was an open discounting of the Soviet naval threat . . . My administration . . . will restore the goal of a Navy second to none."

—Nixon's "submarine gap" speech at Norfolk, Oct. 2

"Soviet naval propaganda has been extensively and successfully employed to hide the fact of the USSR's very great and potentially disastrous qualitative naval inferiority vis-a-vis the NATO naval forces . . . The failure of Western publicists not only to discredit such claims but to heap on them the ridicule that they deserve all testifies to . . . a fundamentally ill-advised willingness to magnify the Soviet naval 'threat' out of all proportions in order either to produce sensational articles or to justify larger naval appropriations . . . In no other area does the West have such a commanding superiority over the USSR as in naval power."

—Soviet Naval Strategy, *by Commander Robert W. Herrick, U.S. Navy (ret.), published last July by the U.S. Naval Institute at Annapolis with a foreword by Admiral Arleigh Burke. Commander Herrick was an intelligence officer and a naval attache in Moscow.*

Leo Huberman 1903-1968

We record with sorrow that our old friend Leo Huberman, co-editor with Paul Sweezy of the Monthly Review has died suddenly in Paris. His was a life of happy and undeviating devotion. No one surpassed him in clarity and grace as an expositor of Marxist ideas. As an editor and publisher he pioneered in many areas, notably in providing a sympathetic view of the Castro revolution. He earned an honored place in the history of American radicalism and made a notable contribution to the labor movement during the New Deal period.

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